4-H Programs of Distinction

What are 4-H Programs of Distinction?

4-H Programs of Distinction are a collection of program descriptions that reflect the high quality of 4-H youth development programs that are occurring in communities across the United States. They represent outstanding examples of programs that:

- Exhibit strong program development and contribute to the youth development body of knowledge
- Convey new ideas, materials, or innovative methods related to positive youth development OR
- Represent long term program efforts and impact data over an extended period of time
- Demonstrate changes in knowledge, behaviors, attitudes or aspirations of 4-H youth and adults

Why 4-H Programs of Distinction?

Scholarship is defined as intellectual work whose significance is validated by one's peers, whose relevance is valued by those for whom it is intended, and that is communicated to others so that human knowledge advances and so others can improve their educational programs. The 4-H Programs of Distinction is designed to help 4-H professionals to:
- Better understand the nature of scholarship in their work
- Submit program outcomes through a peer-evaluated format
- Communicate the high quality of 4-H youth development programs that are occurring in communities across the United States
- Assist others in improving their practices in positive youth development.

The Submission Process

4-H Programs of Distinction can be submitted two ways:

1) Submitted directly from the author or
2) By recommendation from the State 4-H Program Leader

Manuscripts are accepted on a continuous basis. All submissions must be submitted electronically to Barbara Stone: bstone@csrees.usda.gov Please type "POD Manuscript" in the message line.

How will the 4-H Programs of Distinction be accessible?

Web Site

4-H Programs of Distinction will be available through an on-line searchable database on the 4-Husa.org website, CYFERnet and related sites. The central database will feature selected 4-H Programs of Distinction, author recognition, and full recognition to the author's state and institution. Because of the continuous submission process, new content will be readily available. A 4-H Programs of Distinction cover page template will also be available for developing reports, media press kits and impact reports to funding sources.

Invited Presentations

Top "Program of Distinction" entries will be selected for invited presentations and/or poster sessions at the annual NAE4-HA conference. The number of entries will be at the discretion of the NAE4-HA program committee.

What are the Characteristics of a Program of Distinction?

The following characteristics are examples of what represents a Program of Distinction:

- Teamwork, collaborative or cross-disciplinary work is evident
- Planned education efforts are based on expressed needs
- Stages of program planning are evident: clear objectives, appropriate delivery methods, development/use of curricula and other educational materials, evaluation which documents impact, communication of impact and validation by peers
- Demonstrates a high level of expertise, evidence of originality, or sustainability
- Demonstrates measurable, positive outcomes
- Is replicable

4-H Programs of Distinction is supported by the National 4-H system partners and coordinated through National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES, USDA. Contact:
Barbara Stone, National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES, USDA,
TEL: 202-720-5345, E-mail: bstone@csrees.usda.gov

4-H Programs of Distinction
Criteria for Evaluation

The criteria for 4-H Programs of Distinction are reviewed for program content and readability. A total of 100 points will be assigned. Comments will be provided as appropriate.

Program Content (70 points)

Importance:
Does the program warrant inclusion as a Program of Distinction? Does it represent something that 4-H educators, colleagues and stakeholders should know?

Innovation:
Is it innovative and original? Does it describe something that has not been widely done?

Program Description and Design:

Are the planned educational efforts based on needs assessment and relevant data? It the targeted audience clearly identified?   Is teamwork or collaboration evident?

Program Outcomes and Impacts: (Describes short-term, mid-term or long-term outcomes. What happened as a result of the program?)

Program Evaluation: *Process* indicators: Were the activities conducted as planned? *Program outcome* indicators: Did the participants demonstrate: the desired level of knowledge and skills, enhanced awareness, or improved practices expected for the program?

Readability (30 points)

Interest: Captures and holds readers attention

Comprehension: Uses easy to understand language: flows well.

Development: Paragraphs and sentences are appropriately sequenced and constructed to support the central idea and conclusions.

Mechanics: Uses acceptable standards of spelling and grammar.

Graphics: Tables, graphs or photographs are accurate and appropriate

4-H Programs of Distinction
Submission Form

Maximum length: 1,000 words, plus tables and graphics.

Program of Distinction Category: (See "Program of Distinction Categories")

Title of the Program:

Rationale for Program:

Program Description and Design:

Knowledge and Research Base Used for Program Content and Design: (include citations)

Targeted Audience:

Program Outcomes and Impacts:

Program Evaluation:
(Description of procedures and findings providing evidence that program achieved its targeted outcomes)

Suggestions for Replication of Program in Other Settings:

Sources of Funding:

Contact Person for Additional Information:

4-H Programs of Distinction
Categories

The 4-H Programs of Distinction categories support the National 4-H Strategic Plan, current national priorities, the 2004 4-H Professional Research, Knowledge and Competency (4-H PRKC 2004) model and those areas that build overall capacity for 4-H youth development.

Leadership, Citizenship and Life Skills Categories
- Leadership Development
- Caring Relationships, Community Spirit
- Diversity & Inclusive Environments
- Workforce Preparation
- Financial Education

Science, Engineering and Technology Literacy Categories
- Natural Resources Education
- Animal Science & Food and Fiber Systems
- Foods & Nutrition
- Agriculture & Environmental Biotechnology
- Horticulture & Plant Sciences
- Science Engineering and Technology

Healthy Lifestyles Categories
- Youth Obesity
- Nutrition Education
- Health & Fitness
- Safety
- Healthy Relationships, Good Decisions

Youth in Governance Categories
- Youth & Adult Partnerships
- Youth Action
- Organizational Alliances
- Community Development

Organizational Strategies Categories
- Youth Development Program Strategies
- Strategic Communication & Marketing
- Partnership & Grants
- Risk Management Strategies
- Volunteer Development
- Developing & Retaining 4-H Professionals
- Leadership & Governance of Boards